

**Schedule of Meeting Times:**

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM  
 Study Sunday 10:00 AM  
 Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM  
 Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM  
*Singing every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday evening*  
 Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

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“But as he was discussing **righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come**, Felix became frightened and said, ‘Go away for the present, and **when I find time** I will summon you.’”

—Acts 24:25

[...But, apparently, *he never did.* —ksv]

**Servants during January:**

**Songleader:** Stanley (7), Larry (14), Dwight (21), Stanley (28)

**Reading:** Mike M

**Announcements:** Stanley

**Table:** Larry, Mike M, Marty, Stanley

**Wednesday Lesson:** Larry (3), Stanley (10), Kris (17), Larry (24), Stanley (31)

**Lawn Mowing (week starting):** Missing in action again, until spring...

**Area Meetings:**

**Hays Mill church of Christ**

21705 Hays Mill Road

Elkmont, AL 35620

# The Bible . Examiner

“Examine everything carefully...” —1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

Volume 6

January 7, 2024

Number 31

## “If Any Man Wills...”

by Dan S. Shipley

Rest assured that when Felix heard Paul “concerning the faith in Christ Jesus,” Acts 24:24, he heard exactly what he needed to hear and he heard it from one of the most competent and informed teachers of that time. In his case it was not a question, as when we teach, as to whether the most appropriate things were taught or whether enough was said or whether it was spoken in the proper spirit. And, judging from his response to what was heard concerning “righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come,” v25, a terrified Felix got the point. But, regretfully, he dismisses God’s servant and, with him, God’s truth with the pitiful answer, “Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me,” v25. So far as we know, that convenient season and salvation never came to Felix. Felix was lost! But why?

Certainly not because God wanted it that way! When the apostle

Peter wrote that God is “not willing that any should perish,” 2 Pet 3:9, that surely included Felix. When Jesus said that “God so loved the world,” Jn 3:16, that, too, included Felix. Felix was no less the object of God’s great love and concern than was the apostle Paul. Jesus teaches us that the soul of Felix was worth more than the whole world, Mt 16:26. Then He proved it by dying on the cross for all men—for Felix. Through the Holy Spirit, men like Paul were divinely directed into all the truth, Jn 16:13, and were told to preach it unto all the world, Mt. 28:20, so that sinners like Felix may learn words whereby they might be saved, Acts 11:14.

Yet, in spite of God’s will, His love and His every provision; in spite of the efforts of an inspired apostle, Felix was lost! —and he was lost by choice! He chose to sow to flesh rather than the spirit; to serve self rather than God. And, even though God regrets such a decision, He nevertheless respects it. He allows man to do as he

pleases, even when he chooses to spurn God's grace and reject His salvation, as did Felix. This is, as some have termed it, God's "permissive will," Jn 7:17, and clearly shows the two wills involved in salvation: "If any man wills to do His will..." While it is true that environment and circumstances may and do influence one's character, in the final analysis every man is what he chooses to be. As someone has well said, "Our character is but the stamp on our souls of the free choices of good and evil we have made through life." Spiritually, Felix was what he chose to be—and so are we.

True, we don't always like to take

# Filthy Rags?

*by Robert F. Turner*

As a small boy I often heard sectarian preachers proclaim: "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags..." Isa 64:6, and I wondered why God was so critical of man's efforts to serve Him. Later, hearing this passage used by Baptist debaters, I realized that they were saying that man, no matter how much "good" he does, must be saved by Jesus Christ. We were in agreement on that point.

But they used this filthy rag bit to argue that baptism was not essential to man's salvation—baptism was a "filthy rag." I could point out the

credit for what we may have become. Some blame God; others blame God's people; still others find countless excuses with which to salve their consciences, but none of this changes anything. We are still just about what we want to be in our relationship with God. Facing up to this fact would help put things in perspective for a lot of the unfaithful. Felix and all like him will find that their choices are not without consequences. He who chooses to sow to the flesh will reap accordingly, Gal 6:8. God's sovereignty is vindicated in judgment. He wants you saved. The question is...

—via *Plain Talk*, June 1980 

difference in man's "own righteousness" (trying to lift himself) and a self-denying submission to "God's righteousness," Rom 10:3; but the Baptist debater knew that God commanded baptism, and he still called it "filthy rags." This didn't make sense, then or now. Isaiah 64:6 has been grossly misused.

Its context, verse 5, says, "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness..." and the American Standard footnote on "meetest" is "sparest." The same word (Hebrew, "paga") is found in

Isaiah 47:3 where the American Standard has "spare," and Keil and Delitzsch translate "receive or pardon." Apparently the word means a meeting that has purpose or consequence in view, either friendly or hostile. On Isaiah 64:5 Keil & Delitzsch say, "come to meet" in the sense of "coming to the help of"; and they cite and approve another rendering, "if we had continued in Thy ways, then we should have been preserved." Adam Clarke cites the Syriac version, "Thou meetest with joy those who work righteousness." God is happy to see men obey.

Isa. 64:6 says, "we are all become as one that is unclean, and all our righteousness are as a polluted garment..." (American Standard, emphasis mine.) God would like righteousness on our part, meaning obedience to Him; but we are no longer serving Him—our garments are polluted. (And if preachers would discover what the "filthy rags" were, they might not speak so freely of this before a mixed audience [See the NET or LEB translations –ksv].) This passage is encouraging righteousness on man's part, not making light of it (See Ezek 3:20,21). The system of

works versus the system of faith, as argued in the New Testament, is not under consideration in these passages.

And even when we get to the New Testament, there are no disparaging statements about man's obedience to God. On the contrary, the Apostle of Love writes, "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one also that doeth righteousness is begotten of Him." And, "...he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous," 1 Jn 2:29; 3:7. That certainly doesn't sound like "filthy rags" does it?

Paul, in the Roman letter, quickly corrects the man who thinks he can be saved by "works" ("doing" so perfectly that he is blameless or "justified") by pointing out that "all have sinned." All must have forgiveness, and this is possible only in Christ, Rom 3:23f. Salvation is, therefore, by faith (the system of trust in Jesus Christ) not by a system of law in which there was no ultimate forgiveness. But Paul commends obedience and good deeds, Rom 2:6-11. Stubborn unrighteousness is the "filthy rag."

—via *Plain Talk*, June 1980 

## Remember in Prayer

**Mike M's wife, Mary**, had surgery Tuesday for early stage lung cancer, but will need radiation as a follow-up. **Mike B** had an additional procedure for his cancer Friday, as well.

Please remember those with other chronic issues as well—such as **Carolyn; Betty;** and **John, Sylvia,** and **Paige Pollard,** and **Joyce.** 